

NEWSLETTER

NEW

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 2



HISTORY Frederick Douglass Cemetery located at 1421 Wilkes Street in Alexandria, VA., dates back to the early 1800s. Black residents of Alexandria, VA., named this burial ground after the great activist Frederick Douglass soon after he died in 1895. Well over 2000 African Americans are buried here, with several hundred born into slavery and then freed." Two hundred are children, some who were stillborn and some who only lived very short lives. Records indicate that of 2000 buried here, approximately six to seven hundred headstones are present.

FRIENDS OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS CEMETERY

This is the Friends of Frederick Douglass Memorial newsletter. This quarterly Newsletter will keep all Stakeholders and the public informed of the scope of work and ongoing progress at the Douglass Cemetery. This special edition honors Mr. Percy White, who departed this life in January of 2023. Mr. White was the founder of Finding Family Roots.com. Percy was a former basketball player in the Washington, D.C., area. He worked as a probation officer in the City of Alexandria, VA. He was a history buff and traveled throughout the country. Percy traversed those out-of-the-way places taking pictures and writing about his experiences. He was a sports lover and shared his love with everyone he met. Percy helped to start several community-based groups, most notably the SRG or Social Responsibility Group, which he helped to establish in 2019. He will be missed.



Percy White, former Gang Coordinator for the City of Alexandria

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CURRENT SITUATIONS

Howard University students are now working alongside the City of Alexandria Archaeologists to help with research and oral history recordings of descendants and stakeholders of Douglass Memorial Cemetery. Work has begun to restore this Historically Black Cemetery, thanks in part to efforts by the city, state, local groups, and organizations.



If you would like to locate a loved one that you think may have been buried at Douglass or would like to help! Please call 301-503-5154

REVIEW Well, about four years ago my mother told me that we had a lot of family members buried in Douglass. "I thought my mother had lost her mind." My mother passed on Mother's Day back in 2018, and six months after that something drove me to Douglass, and what I found was very disturbing. Vegetation had grown everywhere; the flooding was like a lake that had been formed overnight. I started to ask questions prior to researching when these problems first appeared on the city radar screen and could not get a correct answer to any of these issues from city officials. It had gotten so bad that the one person I was asking questions of sent me directly to his boss, who asked, "How did you find out about Douglass?" My reply was, "what difference does that make?" Then I spoke to one of my best cousins who told me that We are **STAKEHOLDERS** and any information that I or we request should be answered.

LET IT FLOW So much of our history has been forgotten, and so many of our loved ones paved the way for us that I felt that my duty and honor to them should be first to allow them that Final Resting place to be a place of peace. The last known burial took place here back in 1975. The city was awarded a \$5000.00 grant to bring Douglass back to par in 2021. Work has yet to begin, but we are closer today to that work than we were yesterday. We have started Friends of Douglass Cemetery Group, Alexandria African American Hall of Fame, and several other groups and stakeholders are now a part of this push to have our history and burial places respected and honored by us and others.

THE LOOK AHEAD

The Oral History program has started the following actions:

- Looking at different grant opportunities.
- Students from a Historical HBCU (Howard University) are working with our research team.
- Mr. Francesco De Salvatore will be taking the lead with Oral History recordings.
- Michael Johnson is now on the City Archaeologist Commission.

For the month of February in honor of Black History month, the following books are highly recommended to read. This month's special lecture will be on F. H. M Murray



Author Anita Hackley Lambert shares about the life, achievements, and contributions of Freeman Henry Morris Murray, a local advocate for equal rights and civil justice.

Historian, genealogist, biographer, and business owner Anita Hackley Lambert is the author of *F. H. M. Murray: First Biography of a Forgotten Pioneer for Civil Justice*. The result of ten years of research, this biography is the first on F. H. M. Murray (1859-1950), a prominent local civil rights advocate and Ms. Lambert's great-grandfather. A co-founder of the Niagara movement and caretaker of Frederick Douglass Memorial Cemetery in Alexandria, F. H. M. Murray lived during important aspects of Black history such as the Underground Railroad, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Booker T. Washington.

This program is co-sponsored by the Alexandria African American Hall of Fame.

You may also enjoy, "African Americans and Clara Barton with the National Park Service" on Tuesday, February 21, at 1 PM.

Scan the QR code below to Register

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SCAN ME



SCAN ME

REFERENCES

If you would like more information on Fredrick Douglass Memorial Cemetery and other historical black landmarks, please go to one of the following websites:

<https://AlexandriaAfricanAmericanHallofFame.com>

<https://www.alexandriava.gov> (look under Douglass Cemetery)

<https://alextimes.com/2021/11/thefightto-preserve-douglas-cemetery/>-Oliva

<http://www.socialresponsibility.org>

<https://blackcemeterynetwork.org/> , BCN

Anderson, alextimes.com November 26, 2021. Matthew Torres, WUSA9News, August 31, 2021, concerns growing over flooding at the historically Black cemetery in Alexandria

<https://www.wusa9.com>

Also <https://Findfamilyroots.com/cemeteries> October 2021. Douglass is a member of the National Black Cemeteries Org.



CONTACT

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